

East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee
Meeting summary
June 10, 2017 - draft

CAC Charge: The charge of the East Whatcom Community Council Clean Air Committee is to work jointly with the Northwest Clean Air Agency to develop a comprehensive, community-based, long-range plan designed to improve the air quality in the East Whatcom County Region.

Chair: Phil Cloward, East Whatcom Community Council

Members: Jerry DeBruin & David Moe, WCFPD #14; John Wolpers, Whatcom County Health Department; Mark Schofield OppCo; Veronica Dearden, Kendall Watch Community Action Group; Kurt Thompson, community member; Viktor Vetkov, Slavic Church; Wain Harrison, Whatcom County; Julie O'Shaughnessy, NWCAA

Present: Phil Cloward, Jerry DeBruin, John Wolpers, Mark Schofield, Mark Sniffen, Seth Preston

Agenda items:

1. **Introductions** – Introductions were not necessary. Only Clean Air Committee members were present.
2. **Approval of April 12, 2017 meeting summary**
Motion:
 - Mark Schofield moved to approve meeting notes.
 - John Wolpers seconded the motion.
3. **Open public comment** – No public comment.
4. **Announcements**

John - Noted that because of a citizen's complaints about wood smoke, NWCAA executive director Mark Buford had been asked to talk about the issue at a Whatcom County Council meeting in the near future. Mark Buford is planning to give a presentation that NWCAA developed about the work the agency and the Clean Air Committee have done to reduce wood smoke pollution in Columbia Valley. John wondered if a CAC member or members should go to the meeting to provide support. Seth said it would be good to have someone at the meeting in case there are questions. John said he will attend because of his job, but suggested others could be there too.

John said he expects the discussion to include the idea of banning outdoor burning in rural areas where it is now allowed.

Phil – Said the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center is continuing to look into the possibility of converting its building's heating system to a wood-fired generator. Continued high heating bills are driving the conversation. Center representatives have had preliminary contacts with the Washington departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Commerce, and with Washington State University. Also, NWCAA is aware of the discussions. It's all preliminary at this point, and more information will be developed and shared.

5. Residential wood sheds; construction & delivery update

Phil – Phil said he is planning to pick up 6 to 9 completed sheds from Mount Baker High School on Thursday, which would bring the number ready for delivery to 12. There are 14 people on the waiting list for sheds, but since it's getting near the end of the school year, the high school class might not get the final few done. Phil said the problem will be finding the people to help deliver the sheds. The local Saturday Christian men's group, has been very supportive, is busy until after the Fourth of July.

John asked if the person who was trying to sell one of the wood sheds was identified. Phil said he checked with all of his contacts, but no one knew who it could be. Seth noted that NWCAA sent out a letter to all shed program participants reminding them that they had agreed to use the sheds solely for wood storage at their addresses. Jerry said he will again use the Fire District reader board to put up the message reminding people that they should gather firewood now for the winter.

6. Biomass committee update

Phil – Said he is looking at a 40-acre site owned by Lehigh Cement as the potential location for a biomass plant. If an agreement to take over the site could be reached, Phil estimated it would take up to 3 years to transfer the current lease.

7. Clean Air Committee's fall community event

All: The committee decided to hold a fall event on Sept. 19 at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. The event will focus on the upcoming home-heating season.

Ideas for the event include giving out moisture meters; providing handouts and tip sheets on clean burning, available programs to help, etc.; a "clean burning" demonstration of some kind; and holding a raffle with a free wood shed as the grand prize.

Phil suggested having a written quiz that would show what people do or do not know about clean burning. Committee members agreed that a quiz could be educational and interactive.

Mark Schofield said the Opportunity Council would have a table at the event to provide information on assistance programs. He also suggested representing the "life cycle of burning" and the committee agreed that includes information about how to secure wood, dry it, burn it properly, and avoid burning garbage and other illegal materials.

The committee provided food for community members at previous events. Jerry noted that the committee served pizza at a past event.

Committee members agreed to talk about the event agenda at the next meeting.